

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-15 DHA-05 ERDA-07 INT-05 STR-05
COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 TRSE-00 CU-06 ACDA-10
OMB-01 /136 W

-----101372 062347Z /70

R 061823Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2096
INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, GW
SUBJECT: PUBLIC REACTION TO DGB METALWORKERS UNION
CONVENTION

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REF: (A) BONN 16641 (B) BONN 16498; (C) BONN 16182;
(D) BONN 15355

WHILE THE SPD AND CDU/CSU LARGELY ABSTAINED FROM
COMMENTING ON THE DGB METALWORKERS UNION CONVENTION,
THERE WERE CRITICAL REACTIONS FROM THE FDP, MANAGEMENT
QUARTERS AND PARTS OF THE CONSERVATIVE PRESS. SOME

OF THE MAJOR REACTIONS ARE GIVEN HEREAFTER:

1. THE CONFEDERATION OF GERMAN EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS (BDA) STATED THAT THE REVIVAL OF CLASS STRUGGLE AS REFLECTED IN LODERER'S SPEECH (REF A) DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE SOLUTION OF ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS. THE METALWORKERS' UNION DECISION CALLING FOR A DGB BOYCOTT OF THE "CONCERTED ACTION" ROUND-TABLE TALKS DEMONSTRATES THAT THE UNION AND ITS PRESIDENT ARE STRIVING TOWARD A CONFRONTATION "AT ANY PRICE". THE CONTINUATION OF THE "AGGRESSIVE WAGE POLICY" AS DECIDED BY THE CONVENTION WOULD CREATE ADDITIONAL DANGERS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND THE REDUCTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT, THE BDA WARNED.

2. IN A SEPARATE STATEMENT DEALING WITH THE METALWORKERS UNION'S ATTACKS AGAINST THE EMPLOYERS' CONSTITUTIONAL COMPLAINT AGAINST THE CODETERMINATION LAW, THE BDA MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE EXCLUSIVE PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT ACTION WAS TO OBTAIN A FINAL CLARIFICATION IN THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL COURT OF EXISTING CONSTITUTIONAL MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE LAW BY THE BDA MEMBERS. IT CHARGED THE UNION WITH TRYING TO PREVENT EMPLOYERS FROM USING CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND EMPHASIZED THAT "SOCIAL PEACE IS INCONCEIVABLE WITHOUT A GUARANTEED LEGAL ORDER." THE BDA SIMULTANEOUSLY REAFFIRMED UNCLASSIFIED

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ITS READINESS TO WORK WITH THE UNIONS TOWARD FINDING SOLUTIONS FOR PRESENT ECONOMIC, EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS. THE BDA RENEWED PREVIOUS PROPOSALS FOR THE RESUMPTION OF SUMMIT TALKS BETWEEN THE BDA AND THE DGB TO WHICH THE UNIONS HAD NOT YET RESPONDED.

3. THE NATIONAL METAL EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION (GESAMT-METALL) DENOUNCED THE "FLOOD OF CLAIMS AND EXPECTATIONS" RAISED BY THE METALWORKERS UNION CONVENTION WHICH, WHEN COMBINED WITH THE METALWORKERS' CRITICISM OF THE "SOCIAL MARKET ECONOMY" SYSTEM, DOES NOT MAKE IT CLEAR UNDER WHICH OTHER ECONOMIC SYSTEM THESE DEMANDS COULD BE MET. THE FEDERATION PRESIDENT, WOLFRAM THIELE, WARNED THAT MANAGEMENT SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR AN UNRATIONAL UNION WAGE POLICY, AND THAT THE ONLY COUNTER TO A UNION-SPONSORED STRIKE WOULD BE AN EMPLOYER-SPONSORED DEFENSIVE LOCK-OUT.

4. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL METAL EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION (GESAMTMETALL), DR. DIETER KIRCHNER, REJECTED UNION CHARGES THAT THE MANAGEMENT ACTION AGAINST THE CODETERMINATION LAW WAS DISTURBING IN-

DUSTRIAL PEACE IN THE PLANTS. HE CHARGED THE METAL-
WORKERS UNION WITH "SHARPENING ITS AGGRESSIVE FIGHT
FOR A REDISTRIBUTION OF INCOME IN FAVOR OF THE WORKERS
BY USING ALL UNION MEANS OF POWER. "THIS IS A DECLARA-
TION OF WAR WHICH ENDANGERS INDUSTRIAL PEACE", HE
WARNED.

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5. FDP FEDERAL EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, GUENTER VERHEUGEN,

ALSO SHARPLY CRITICIZED THE DEVELOPMENTS AT THE DUESSEL-DORF METALWORKERS UNION CONVENTION. HE STATED THAT THE SIGNALS WHICH WERE SENT FROM DUESSELDORF INDICATE A UNCLASSIFIED

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STORM. THE UNION REFUSAL TO CONTINUE COOPERATING IN THE "CONCERTED ACTION" PROGRAM IS A REACTION OF STUBBORNNESS WHICH IS NOT HELPFUL TO THE PROMOTION OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STABILITY. VERHEUGEN ALSO CRITICIZED THE UNION AND PRESIDENT LODERER FOR HAVING EXERTED PRESSURE ON THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL COURT ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE EMPLOYERS' SUIT AGAINST THE CODETERMINATION LAW. THE "BORDER OF UNLAWFULNESS" HAD AT LEAST BEEN TOUCHED WHEN LODERER SOUGHT TO RESTRICT THE COURT'S FREEDOM OF DECISION-MAKING WITH OBSCURE THREATS, VERHEUGEN EMPHASIZED.

6. FDP CHAIRMAN, FOREIGN MINISTER HANS-DIETRICH GENSCHER, ADDRESSING A REGIONAL FDP PARTY CONVENTION IN ST. INGBERT (SAARLAND) ON SEPTEMBER 30, INDIRECTLY REFERRED TO THE DEVELOPMENTS AT THE METALWORKERS UNION CONVENTION (REF B AND C), AND CONDEMNED ALL "IDEOLOGICALLY-TAINTED" PROGRAMS TO SOLVE THE ECONOMIC CRISIS. THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM ALONE IS INSUFFICIENT WITHOUT "POSITIVE SIGNALS COMING FROM THE WAGE FRONT" (READ: UNION WAGE RESTRAINT), HE SAID. "SOLIDARITY WITH THE UNEMPLOYED DOES NOT MEAN DISTRIBUTION OF AVAILABLE WORK AMONG MORE SHOULDERS SINCE THIS WOULD HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THE GERMAN ABILITY TO COMPETE ABROAD" HE WARNED. WHAT THE FRG NEEDS IS A WAGE POLICY (WAGE RESTRAINT) WHICH MAKES POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LABOR MARKET POSSIBLE, GENSCHER STRESSED.

7. COMMENTS IN THE CONSERVATIVE PRESS, SUCH AS THE "FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE" AND "DIE WELT" DEPLORED THE REVIVAL OF A SPIRIT OF CLASS STRUGGLE WHICH WAS REFLECTED IN UNION RESOLUTIONS, SPEECHES OF DELEGATES AND PRESIDENT LODERER'S BASIC POLICY ADDRESS (REFS UNCLASSIFIED

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A-C). THE PAPERS CHARGED THAT THE UNION FUNCTIONARIES AND LEADERSHIP ARE LACKING ALL SENSE OF PROPORTIONS, THUS LEADING TO GLOOMY PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE.

8. COMMENT: THE CRITICAL REACTION BY THE EMPLOYERS SPEAKS FOR ITSELF, BUT MANAGEMENT, IN THE ABSENCE OF

KIDNAPPED BDA AND BDI PRESIDENT HANNS-MARTIN SCHLEYER,
NO LONGER SPEAKS WITH ONE VOICE. SCHLEYER'S CONTINUED
ABSENCE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY MAKE A COORDINATION OF
MANAGEMENT POLICY TOWARD THE LABOR MOVEMENT MORE DIFFI-
CULT AND THIS MIGHT INCREASE THE DANGER OF A CONFRON-
TATION WHICH NOBODY WANTS AT THIS TIME. THE FDP IS
PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THAT A POSSIBLE CONFRONTATION,
PERHAPS ON THE OCCASION OF THE FORTHCOMING WAGE ROUND
IN THE METAL INDUSTRY, MAY LEAD TO NEW FRICTIONS IN THE
GOVERNMENT AND MAY EVENTUALLY IMPAIR THE STABILITY OF
THE SOCIAL/LIBERAL COALITION. THE DEVELOPMENTS AT
THE METALWORKERS UNION CONVENTION SHOWED THAT THE FDP
REMAINS THE MAIN TARGET OF UNION ATTACKS AGAINST THE
SOCIAL/LIBERAL COALITION GOVERNMENT.
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